

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 44 Canceled.

45. (Currently Amended) A process for forming an absorbent article comprising:

unwinding a roll of a first material at a determined rate for processing using an unwind device, the unwind device being in communication with a festoon, the festoon including a plurality of rotatable guide rolls through which the first material being unwound is threaded, the festoon accumulating a determined length of the first material sufficient to sustain temporary stoppages by the unwind device during the unwind process and wherein, during steady state, at least certain of the guide rolls are not actively driven such that the guide rolls comprise idler rolls;

decreasing the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound causing the accumulated length of material contained in the festoon to be released in order for the rate at which the first material is moving downstream of the festoon to remain substantially unchanged;

actively decelerating certain of the guide rolls in the festoon with a drive device when the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound decreases at the unwind device, the guide rolls being decelerated independent of each other; and

wherein the first material being unwound is fed into a process for forming absorbent articles, the first material being incorporated into the absorbent article, the absorbent article comprising a liner material, an outer cover material, and an absorbent material positioned in between the liner material and the outer cover material.

46. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 45, further comprising the steps of:

increasing the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound at the unwind device after the rate has been decreased; and

actively accelerating certain of the guide rolls in the festoon with the drive device when the rate at which the roll of material is unwound increases, the guide rolls being accelerated independent of each other, the guide rolls being accelerated at a rate

that generally corresponds to the rate at which the first material is accelerated through the festoon.

47. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the festoon includes from about four (4) to about (10) guide rolls.

48. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the guide rolls that are actively decelerated by a drive device are decelerated according to a predetermined deceleration profile.

49. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 48, wherein the speed of the guide rolls being actively decelerated by a drive device is monitored and sent to a controller, the controller being configured to decelerate the guide rolls according to the deceleration profile based upon the monitored speed of each guide roll.

50. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the drive device comprises guide rolls are actively decelerated by a braking device.

51. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the drive device comprises guide rolls are actively decelerated by a stepper motor or a servo motor.

52. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the festoon includes an upstream guide roll, a plurality of midstream guide rolls, and a downstream guide roll, and wherein the upstream guide roll and the midstream guide rolls are actively decelerated by drive devices.

53. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the rate at which the roll of material is unwound is decreased and temporarily stopped.

54. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the first material being unwound from the roll is spliced to a second roll of material during the decrease in rate at which the roll of material is unwound.

55. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the festoon includes a first set of guide rolls spaced from a second set of guide rolls, the first set of guide rolls being in operative association with a carriage, the carriage being movable towards the second set of guide rolls when the rate of material exiting the festoon is greater than the rate of material entering the festoon.

56. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the roll of material is unwound at a rate of at least 100 feet per minute.

57. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the festoon accumulates a length of material sufficient to sustain a stoppage of from about one (1) second to about five (5) seconds during the unwind process.

58. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the absorbent article is one of diapers, child's training pants, feminine care articles, and incontinence articles.

59. (Original) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the first material comprises the liner material, the cover material, or the absorbent material.

60. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 45, wherein the first material has a basis weight of less than about 25 gsm.

61. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 55, wherein the carriage moves toward and away from the second set of guide rolls due to tension of the first material in the festoon.

62. (Currently Amended) A process for forming an absorbent article comprising:

unwinding a roll of a first material at a determined rate for processing using an unwind device, the unwind device being in communication with a festoon, the festoon including a plurality of rotatable guide rolls through which the first material being unwound is threaded, the festoon accumulating a determined length of the first material sufficient to sustain temporary stoppages by the unwind device during the unwind process;

decreasing the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound causing the accumulated length of material contained in the festoon to be released in order for the rate at which the first material is moving downstream of the festoon to remain substantially unchanged;

actively decelerating certain of the guide rolls in the festoon with a drive device when the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound decreases at the unwind device, the guide rolls being decelerated independent of each other, the guide

rolls being decelerated based upon an amount of inertia contained in the respective guide roll so as to minimize tension increases or decreases in the first material; and

wherein the first material being unwound is fed into a process for forming absorbent articles, the first material being incorporated into the absorbent article, the absorbent article comprising a liner material, an outer cover material, and an absorbent material positioned in between the liner material and the outer cover material.

63. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 62, further comprising the steps of:

increasing the rate at which the roll of the first material is unwound at the unwind device after the rate has been decreased; and

actively accelerating certain of the guide rolls in the festoon with the drive device when the rate at which the roll of material is unwound increases, the guide rolls being accelerated independent of each other, the guide rolls being accelerated at a rate that generally corresponds to the rate at which the first material is accelerated through the festoon.

64. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the festoon includes from about four (4) to about (10) guide rolls.

65. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the guide rolls that are actively decelerated by a drive device are decelerated according to a predetermined deceleration profile.

66. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 65, wherein the speed of the guide rolls being actively decelerated by a drive device is monitored and sent to a controller, the controller being configured to decelerate the guide rolls according to the deceleration profile based upon the monitored speed of each guide roll.

67. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the drive device comprises guide rolls are actively decelerated by a braking device.

68. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the drive device comprises guide rolls are actively decelerated by a stepper motor or a servo motor.

69. (Currently Amended) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the festoon includes an upstream guide roll, a plurality of midstream guide rolls, and a downstream guide roll, and wherein the upstream guide roll and the midstream guide rolls are actively decelerated by drive devices.

70. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the rate at which the roll of material is unwound is decreased and temporarily stopped.

71. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the first material being unwound from the roll is spliced to a second roll of material during the decrease in rate at which the roll of material is unwound.

72. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the festoon includes a first set of guide rolls spaced from a second set of guide rolls, the first set of guide rolls being in operative association with a carriage, the carriage being movable towards the second set of guide rolls when the rate of material exiting the festoon is greater than the rate of material entering the festoon.

73. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the roll of material is unwound at a rate of at least 100 feet per minute.

74. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the festoon accumulates a length of material sufficient to sustain a stoppage of from about one (1) second to about five (5) seconds during the unwind process.

75. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the absorbent article is one of diapers, child's training pants, feminine care articles, and incontinence articles.

76. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the first material comprises the liner material, the cover material, or the absorbent material.

77. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 62, wherein the first material has a basis weight of less than about 25 gsm.

78. (Previously Presented) A process as defined in claim 72, wherein the carriage moves toward and away from the second set of guide rolls due to tension of the first material in the festoon.